

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A seamless tubular food casing comprising : ~~at least one vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or vinylpyrrolidone copolymer~~ at least one copolymer comprising units of vinylpyrrolidone and units of at least one comonomer, said comonomer being selected from the group consisting of vinyl alkanoate, vinyl alkyl ether, conjugated alkadiene, acrylamide and α β -ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid, said copolymer being in admixture with cellulose hydrate.
2. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the weight ratio of ~~vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or vinylpyrrolidone~~ said copolymer to cellulose is from 1:25 to 10:1.
3. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim 1, where in the weight ratio of ~~vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or vinylpyrrolidone~~ said copolymer is from 1:5 to 5:1.
4. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim 1, where in the weight ratio of ~~vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or vinylpyrrolidone~~ said copolymer is from 1:4 to 4:1.
5. (canceled)
6. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim [[5]] 1, wherein the proportion of comonomer units is less than 50 mol%, based on the molar weight of all comonomer units in said copolymer.
7. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim [[5]] 1, wherein the proportion of comonomer units is less than 30 mol%, based on the molar weight of all comonomer units in said copolymer.

8. (original) A food casing as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a fiber reinforcement.
9. (original) A food casing as claimed in claim 8, wherein the fiber reinforcement comprises a hemp fiber paper.
10. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim 8, wherein the fiber reinforcement comprises a hemp fiber paper ~~and said paper has, on both sides thereof, a cellulose-hydrate-containing layer, and further wherein at least one vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or vinylpyrrolidone copolymer is present in at least one of said cellulose hydrate layers.~~
11. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim 10, wherein the copolymer in admixture with said ~~comprising~~ a cellulose hydrate comprises a layer on the outside of the fiber reinforcement ~~containing a vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or vinylpyrrolidone copolymer.~~
12. (currently amended) A food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~content of vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or polyvinylpyrrolidone~~ copolymer is present in an amount sufficient to inhibit or suppress mold growth.
13. (original) A food casing as claimed in claim 1 having a length from 5 to 100 m and said casing is shirred to form a shirred stick.
14. (withdrawn and currently amended) A process for producing a food casing as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

shaping a reinforcement to form a tube,

charging said tube externally and/or internally with a mixture of viscose and an aqueous solution ~~of a vinylpyrrolidone homopolymer and/or vinyl pyrrolidone~~ comprising said copolymer,

precipitating and regenerating the mixture, and optionally subsequently washing, plasticizing and drying the casing.

15. (original) An artificial sausage casing comprising a food casing as claimed in claim 1.
16. (currently amended) A ~~dry~~ sausage comprising a food casing as claimed in claim 1.
17. (original) A shirred stick comprising a food casing according to claim 1.
18. (original) A food casing comprising cellulose and an additive, wherein the presence of said additive is in amount sufficient to achieve one or more of the following as compared to a food casing comprising cellulose without said additive:
 - (i) lower permeation while water vapor permeability is preserved,
 - (ii) reduced susceptibility to cellulase and increased resistance to mold, or
 - (iii) a greater affinity of said casing to sausage-meat emulsion.
19. (currently amended) A food casing according to claim 18, wherein said additive comprises polyvinylpyrrolidone PVP.